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RICK LARSEN
2nd District, Washington

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–4702

Committees:
Transportation and Infrastructure

Armed Services

July 9, 2012

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington DC 20423

Dear Chairman Elliot,

As the Surface Transportation Board (STB) continues to consider cases regarding whether trains carrying coal should be sprayed to prevent coal dust escaping, I urge you to allow this practice to continue. While I am not in a position to evaluate the scientific merits of spraying down coal trains, it seems common sense that rail operators carrying coal should be permitted to take all measures necessary to ensure the safety of that cargo and the public health of the communities they travel through.

While increased sales of U.S. commodities will lead to job growth, we must make sure to take into account the economic impacts of any health effects associated with additional rail traffic. I recognize that measures are already in place to decrease the amount of coal dust coming off of trains, but additional common sense safeguards to protect public health should not be discouraged by STB.

Trains carrying coal run through my district, and there is potential for additional trains if a proposed bulk commodity export terminal is constructed. I have heard from many of my constituents who are concerned about potential health effects from current coal train traffic. Any steps that can help alleviate these concerns are positive ones. I am confident that many other communities would also benefit from the knowledge that all possible efforts to protect public health are being taken.

I appreciate your consideration of my request and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Rick Larsen

Rick Larsen
Congressman
Washington, 2nd District

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